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Review of progress in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the new directions strategy for technical cooperation among developing countries

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with paragraph 10 of decision 12/1 B adopted by the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries at its twelfth session. Twenty-five years after the Buenos Aires Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, it presents an analysis of progress in technical cooperation among developing countries in the 2001-2002 biennium. This includes a review of the contributions made by the developing countries, developed countries, intergovernmental organizations and organizations of the United Nations system. From the review, it is apparent that substantial progress has been made in implementing the recommendations contained in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and the New Directions Strategy for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

The analysis points to the conclusion that while the approach to development has been transformed since the Buenos Aires Conference, technical cooperation among developing countries in particular and South-South cooperation in general remain strongly relevant in a period when developing countries face the challenge of entering a globalized market economy. South-South cooperation is widespread and substantial; however, inadequate information has become a major obstacle to the strategic orientation of policies and practices in this area. The paper concludes with recommendations for ways in which to increase the public profile of technical cooperation among developing countries in order to ensure that developing and donor countries and international organizations have a greater awareness of what is happening and what is needed to make technical cooperation among developing countries a truly dynamic instrument in the service of development.

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Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–4	3
II.	Overview of performance	5–8	4
III.	Developing countries	9–13	6
IV.	Pivotal countries	14–24	7
V.	Regional integration	25–34	11
VI.	Developed countries	35–40	13
VII.	United Nations system	41–60	15
VIII.	Non-governmental organizations	61	21
IX.	Conclusions	62	21
X.	Recommendations	63–64	22
Abbreviations and acronyms			24
Tables			
1.	Least developed countries' share of world trade		5
2.	Exports of pivotal countries to developed and developing countries		8

I. Introduction

1. The present biennial report to the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries is submitted in accordance with resolution 12/1 adopted by the High-level Committee at its twelfth session. It reviews implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), the New Directions Strategy for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and decisions of the High-level Committee during the period 2001-2002. Since the report is being submitted a quarter of a century after the adoption of BAPA, it presents a broader historical perspective than has been the practice in previous biennial reports to the High-level Committee. A number of its conclusions and recommendations are also based on that long view.

2. *Buenos Aires Conference*. The Plan of Action adopted in Buenos Aires contained 38 recommendations that established benchmarks for the assessment of South-South cooperation that is found in the present report. Fourteen of those recommendations were directed at the national level, 7 at the regional and subregional levels, 1 at the interregional level and 16 at the global level. Most indicated the direction and objectives of action rather than setting out specific measures to be taken. According to BAPA, the primary objectives of the recommendations at the national level were as follows: "to increase the awareness in each developing country of its own capabilities, skills and experience, and of those available in other developing countries; to establish and strengthen the necessary supportive arrangements — institutions, information, human and other resources — on which technical cooperation among developing countries must firmly be based; to identify specific opportunities for technical cooperation among developing countries, and to enhance the capacities of developing countries to organize and implement expeditiously and effectively projects with a technical cooperation among developing countries dimension."[1]

3. *New Directions*. Seeing the need to reorient technical cooperation among developing countries, the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/96 of 19 December 1994, requested the High-level Committee to report on new directions for technical cooperation among developing countries. New directions were necessary to respond to the challenges posed by increasing globalization. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 50/119 of 20 December 1995, endorsed the recommendations contained in the report on new directions,[2] including the call for a more strategic orientation for technical cooperation among developing countries focusing on priority issues that would be likely to have a major development impact on a large number of developing countries. These issues included: trade and investment, debt, the environment, poverty alleviation, production and employment, macroeconomic policy coordination, education, health, the transfer of technology and rural development. The General Assembly also called upon all Governments and relevant United Nations organizations to consider increasing allocations for technical cooperation among developing countries and to identify new funding

[1] The Buenos Aires Plan of Action, para. 18.

[2] "New directions for technical cooperation among developing countries" (TCDC 13/3).

modalities to promote South-South cooperation[3] such as triangular cooperation (support by developed countries for technical cooperation among developing countries) and private sector funding. Governments and institutions of developing countries were called upon to increase joint efforts in technology cooperation aimed at strengthened scientific and technological management capabilities and demand-oriented information networks serving those involved in technological, infrastructure or human resources development. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the New Directions Strategy for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries[4] is the focus of the present report.

4. In preparing the report, the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) drew on information generated from its regular activities, responses to questionnaires that it had circulated, published reports, Internet searches and, where necessary, telephone interviews. The questionnaires, tailored to the various categories of respondents, were sent to all developing and donor countries; organizations of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, UNDP bureaux and country offices; and a range of relevant intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They solicited information on the implementation of BAPA and the New Directions Strategy, with particular reference to policy and institutional arrangements, the volume of operations, examples of cooperation and recommendations for improving the use of technical cooperation among developing countries.[5] The use of Internet search engines for the present report breaks new ground and provides information that otherwise would not have been captured.

II. Overview of performance

5. Despite incomplete information about the implementation of BAPA and the New Directions Strategy, two initial observations can be made. One is that a number of developing countries have experienced significant progress in the decades since the Buenos Aires Conference, substantially broadening the capacity for technical cooperation among developing countries. The second is that this progress has been ad hoc: in the absence of adequate information and analyses, recommendations relating to the formulation of policies and strategies relating to technical cooperation among developing countries, which were reaffirmed in the New Directions Strategy, have not been fully implemented. Although developing countries undoubtedly consider South-South cooperation to be (in the words of the New Directions Strategy) an "important element of international cooperation for development as well as an essential basis for national and collective self-reliance and a means of promoting the integration of developing countries into the world economy", there is

[3] The term "South-South cooperation" refers to collaboration among developing countries in general, which includes technical as well as economic cooperation. For a more detailed explanation of these terms, see Secretary-General's report on measures to promote and facilitate south-south cooperation (A/57/155).

[4] New Directions Strategy for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (DP/1997/L.9).

[5] Not all the responses to the questionnaire distributed by the Special Unit have been included in this report due to space limitations.

little evidence that governments have given priority to technical cooperation among developing countries in their broader development policies. The process of preparing the present report has made it clear that although cooperation among developing countries has become widespread because it is practical and cost-effective, most practitioners are not guided by institutional policy.

6. Part of the problem is that there is little recollection of the Buenos Aires Conference, even within the United Nations system. Many Governments have moved away from the command philosophy prevalent at the time of the Conference. There seems to be little recognition that technical cooperation among countries is central to the operation of international markets and that among developing countries, the capacity to participate on the basis of shared interests and needs will be a critical determinant of success in integrating into a global system built on multiple levels of coordination and cooperation among the major players.

7. The failure to adopt a strategic approach to technical cooperation among developing countries is most clearly reflected in the fact that despite the substantial economic and technological progress of a number of developing countries and the wide prevalence of technical cooperation among developing countries in international cooperation, developing countries have gained little in terms of collective self-reliance or a more equitable participation in the world economy. This is especially true for the poorest developing countries. The number of least developed countries (LDCs) has increased steadily over the three decades since the United Nations began to categorize them, and there are now 49. Their participation in the world economy has declined since the Buenos Aires Conference. Perhaps the most telling index of failure can be found in statistics showing that the average income in the richest 20 countries is 37 times the average in the poorest 20 — a gap that has doubled in the last 40 years.[5]

Table 1. Least developed countries' share of world trade
(%)

	Exports	Imports
1980	0.72	1.10
2001	0.58	0.70

Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), **UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics, 2002.**

8. An overall assessment of the implementation of BAPA and the New Directions Strategy also reveals the following salient points:

(a) A number of vibrant institutions have been established by developing countries to undertake technical cooperation among developing countries;

(b) As regional and subregional integration proceeds among developing countries, there are more and more opportunities for technical cooperation among developing countries;

(c) The increased interaction among developing countries involves a widening spectrum of sectors and includes areas of high technology;

(d) Interregional cooperation is also growing but at a slower rate than that of intraregional cooperation;

(e) Donor countries are widely supportive of South-South cooperation;

(f) International agencies are also broadly involved in supporting and sponsoring South-South cooperation;

(g) NGO involvement in South-South cooperation is increasing.

III. Developing countries

9. The responses to the questionnaires circulated by the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries indicate that a number of Governments have established vibrant programmes on technical cooperation among developing countries. Most have units within government ministries to deal with South-South cooperation, and budget allocations ranged from a few thousand dollars in one of the LDCs of Africa to tens of millions of dollars in some of the pivotal countries. However, every respondent noted the lack of finance as a constricting factor in South-South cooperation. The prevalent forms of such cooperation have been study tours, seminars and workshops, with a very wide diversity of sectoral activities. Cooperation was undertaken in areas ranging from agriculture, education and communications to trade and investment, the environment, infrastructure, science and technology, and production and employment. Of the areas covered by the New Directions Strategy, only one area was not mentioned repeatedly by respondents to the questionnaire: international debt. One country in Latin America mentioned its competence in debt management as a potential for technical cooperation among developing countries; none saw this as a need despite the fact that since the Buenos Aires Conference, the international debt of developing countries has more than tripled, rising from $329,410 million in 1980 to $1,213,530 million by 2000. (The problem is concentrated among LDCs: of the 42 heavily indebted poor countries identified by the International Monetary Fund, 30 are LDCs.)

10. Almost without exception, respondents also agreed that trends towards regional and subregional integration were the factors contributing the most to South-South cooperation. Most of them also cited the need to work together to benefit from globalization and to meet common challenges. Many respondents noted that the growing number of experts from developing countries was a contributory factor.

11. Lack of information was seen as a significant hindrance to cooperation not only by developing countries but by donors and international agencies as well. Another factor widely noted by Governments made clear the nature of the problem: only two of the respondents from developing countries stated that they had databases of available experts in their own countries. While there was universal agreement that such a database was important and all respondents said that they were aware of the existence of the Web of Information for Development (WIDE) database maintained by the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, few claimed to make more than occasional use of it. The lack of mechanisms to coordinate and manage South-South cooperation and the lack of effective institutions were other inhibiting factors noted by many respondents.

12. The LDCs that responded to the questionnaire, such as Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Tanzania and Senegal, including those that are heavily indebted did not indicate that debt relief and management were a matter of

cooperation with other developing countries, nor did the landlocked countries indicate any cooperative effort to deal with shared problems. The involvement of Bhutan in South-South cooperation was concentrated on the development of infrastructure, education, communications and information services. The sectoral involvement of Burkina Faso covered health and medicine, communications and information services. Senegal focused on initiatives of technical cooperation among developing countries in the areas of agriculture, infrastructure, education, health and medicine, and science and technology. Among the priority areas mentioned in the New Directions Strategy, Bhutan indicated involvement only in capacity-building, but this could include a range of other substantive areas of cooperation. The focus of Burkina Faso with respect to these priority areas was on trade and investment, environment and poverty alleviation; for Senegal, it included those three areas plus aid management, macroeconomic policy coordination, and production and employment. Both of the African LDCs noted political conflicts along with lack of financial resources as the major impediments to increased South-South cooperation. Triangular cooperation has involved human-resource development with Singapore and Thailand in the case of Bhutan and with Cuba and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the case of Burkina Faso.

13. In Latin America, several countries reported strong programmes in support of South-South cooperation. Colombia reported a range of cooperation initiatives that included empowerment of government institutions and it was unique among respondents in providing support for debt relief management. It is one of the two countries that reported having a database on experts and existing capacities in technical cooperation among developing countries. Costa Rica reported South-South cooperation in education, health, and science and technology. Cuba indicated that its strengths in South-South cooperation were in health, education, environment, agriculture, fishery, biotechnology and disaster prevention. It was involved in programmes on food security with a number of other developing countries in the Africa and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Peru noted its cooperation with countries in Central America, with support from Japan. Its strengths as a partner were in fisheries, prevention of natural disasters and anti-earthquake building practices.

IV. Pivotal countries

14. Following the formulation of the New Directions Strategy, the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries convened, in November 1997, a meeting of 23 developing countries that had a strong record of supporting technical cooperation among developing countries. These were: in Africa: Ghana, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa; in Asia: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand; in Central and Eastern Europe: Malta and Turkey; in Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago; and in the Middle East: Egypt and Tunisia. The role of these pivotal countries (as they have come to be called) in South-South cooperation is discussed below.

Table 2. Exports of pivotal countries to developed and developing countries
(%)

	Developed Countries		Developing Countries	
	1980	2001	1980	2001
Argentina	44.8	30.8	32.7	65.3
Brazil	59.4	56.2	32.6	38.2
Chile	63.8	58.4	32.0	38.9
China	44.8	56.6	41.4	41.0
Colombia	76.3	61.2	20.1	37.0
Costa Rica	63.2	71.7	36.7	21.8
Cuba	42.1	48.8	50.5	22.7
Egypt	68.9	62.6	19.0	24.6
Ghana	76.3	66.9	4.5	20.1
India	49.1	55.7	30.6	40.1
Indonesia	77.7	54.9	21.6	44.3
Malaysia	59.7	51.1	37.0	48.3
Malta	79.9	66.0	10.4	28.0
Mauritius	96.6	89.6	3.2	10.3
Mexico[b]	89.6	93.4	8.3	6.1
Nigeria	92.0	72.2	7.7	27.2
Pakistan	37.0	57.9	58.7	39.8
Peru	64.3	62.9	28.2	35.7
Republic of Korea	64.9	49.4	31.6	49.0
Senegal	54.0	55.8	34.6	37.9
Singapore	41.1	41.0	55.0	58.5
South Africa[a]	64.2	65.2	35.2	34.0
Thailand	58.0	57.7	39.2	41.6
Trinidad and Tobago	73.1	70.4	18.7	28.5
Tunisia	87.1	82.1	10.1	13.2
Turkey	57.9	64.9	24.7	18.6

Source: UNCTAD, UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics, 2002.

[a] Statistics for South Africa are for 2000, not 1980.

[b] Mexico is no longer categorized as a developing country; it is now a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

NB. The numbers do not add up to 100 because the exports to Eastern European countries are not shown.

15. China was the largest of the pivotal countries to respond to the questionnaire. It reported activities in South-South cooperation that focused on agriculture, mining, trade and industry, education, health and medicine, science and technology and information services. Cooperation covered a wide range of activities, including the conduct of joint research, provision of information services and organization and participation in network activities. Among the areas stressed in the New Directions Strategy, China has focused on the environment, poverty alleviation, coordination of macroeconomic policies and science and technology. Strategic initiatives included work on the development of the Tumen River and Lancang-Mekong River Basin areas, the Silk Road and cooperation with African countries. The country has special expertise in agriculture, renewable energy (small hydropower, biogas, solar), meat processing, farming of fresh water fish and communications technologies. China, a donor to the Voluntary Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation, supports, among other things, the analysis of current policies, regular contacts among focal points for

technical cooperation among developing countries, meetings of pivotal countries and workshops on the development of software. A database on the country's experts and capacities for technical cooperation among developing countries is being prepared.

16. Malaysia provided information about the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP). Established in 1980, it has provided training and consultative services to other developing countries in project planning and management, information and communications technology, public administration, poverty eradication and diplomacy. In 2001, 862 participants from 85 developing countries attended MTCP courses. In 2002, those numbers rose to 997 participants from 98 countries. A fact-finding mission was sent to Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam in 2001 under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation agreement. Another expert mission went to Algeria to study the issues of economic diversification. MTCP also provided supplies and equipment to support development projects in other countries. In 2002, the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute provided hands-on training to partners in Malawi.

17. Turkey reported playing a leading strategic role in four different cooperation efforts: in the Economic Cooperation Organization; in Black Sea Economic Cooperation; in the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe; and in the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Some 800 cooperation programmes with a biennial budget of $34 million ranged across all economic sectors and involve 7,600 participants from 80 countries. Particular areas of strength were in the development of small and medium enterprises, the development of economic infrastructure, and the health, textiles and leather industries. Project outputs included the first foundry to be built in Gambia and the establishment of universities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Turkey is also one of the few countries that reported having conducted a comprehensive study of its own technical cooperation capacities.

18. For the pivotal countries which did not respond to the questionnaire sent out during the preparation of the present report, information available on the Internet — much of it not up to date in terms of statistical detail but relevant in terms of overall policy and approach — indicates that cooperation among developing countries is widespread and diverse.

19. Brazil, for instance, has a web page (http://www.abc.mre.gov.br/ingles/ctpd/ctpd.htm) that contains the statement that "the Brazilian Government attaches the greatest emphasis on TCDC [technical cooperation among developing countries] as an instrument for conducting its international policy and as an auxiliary mechanism for the promotion of the social and economic development of its cooperation partners. TCDC may therefore allow for the transfer of expertise and techniques, as well as for the strengthening of relations among countries, while identifying issues of interest for future commercial agreements among concerned institutions". The technical cooperation of Brazil is mainly with countries from Central America and the Caribbean but the country is also cooperating with, South America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Projects have focused on the areas of health, agriculture and livestock, industry, public administration, environment, energy, education and mining. One of the stated policy aims is to "closely

collaborate with private initiative entities, Government institutions, state enterprises, education, research and development institutions and international organizations, in such a manner as to channel complementary sources of funding for TCDC actions and their involvement in programmes and projects identified".

20. India is another large pivotal country with information on the web (http://meadev.nic.in/foreign/itecprog.htm) about its activities in technical cooperation among developing countries. The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme has been in existence for nearly four decades and the Government has spent some $2 billion through it and other programmes of technical assistance to 130 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. ITEC assistance takes the following forms: training (civil and military); projects and project-related assistance such as consultancy services and feasibility studies; deputation of experts abroad; and study visits. Participants in ITEC training programmes are government nominees and they number 1,300 every year; including about 400 military personnel. Training has covered diplomacy, mass media, foreign trade, management, audit and accounts, banking, manpower planning, agriculture, rural development, small-scale industries, and computer and information technology. Military training covers a wide range of subjects related to security and strategic studies.

21. Nigeria has promoted South-South cooperation through the Nigeria Trust Fund. Established in 1976, the Fund currently has resources amounting to $432 million. Operated by the African Development Bank (ADB), the Fund is used to provide financing for projects of national or regional importance. In 2002, Nigeria announced that the interest rate on loans from the Fund would be at two per cent instead of four per cent and that part of the net income of the Fund would be directed to the support of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative in support of loan-burdened countries. In 2001, a $25 million Nigeria Technical Cooperation Fund was established by the country's Technical Cooperation Agency under the management of the ADB. It will be used to finance scientific research and technological development in Africa.

22. South Africa, which has the most developed economy in sub-Saharan Africa, has developed broad cooperative links with other African countries bilaterally and through regional forums. A significant bilateral agreement that involves technical cooperation among developing countries is the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project. The project involves South Africa and Lesotho, a landlocked LDC, and is supported by a $15.24 million grant from the World Bank through the Global Environment Facility. It is a collaborative effort by South Africa and Lesotho to protect the exceptionally rich biodiversity and promote sustainable development in the Drakensberg and Maloti Mountains straddling their border. The project will also protect rock art in the mountains and holds exciting opportunities for economic development based on natural and cultural resources. On the South African side, a substantial part of the project area has been listed as a World Heritage site and there is the potential for collaborative work to secure similar areas within Lesotho.

23. A significant aspect of recent developments has been the growing interaction among the pivotal countries. For instance, trade between China and India has grown rapidly in the last decade, from $264.8 million in 1991 to $4.3 billion for the period January-November 2002. Transnational corporations now have a strong role in the

trade of a number of developing countries, especially China and ASEAN members, reflecting the growth of transnational production chains in Asia. In the case of China, among the strongest performers in export growth, this has led to a rise in the share of exports represented by foreign affiliates from 17 per cent in 1991 to over 50 per cent in 2001.[6]

24. Links between India and ASEAN (which includes several pivotal countries) multiplied significantly in the last biennium. India-ASEAN trade in the period 2001-2002 was about $7.8 billion, over three times the 1993-1994 trade figure of $2.5 billion. Economic liberalization in India has attracted an increasing amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) from Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand to crucial new sectors such as telecommunications and tourism as well as to traditional heavy industries, chemicals, fertilizers, textiles and food processing. India and ASEAN also have a broad-based programme of cooperation that includes information technology, biotechnology, advanced materials and space applications. The India-ASEAN Institute of Biotechnology has been established in Jakarta. In September 2002, an India-ASEAN Free Trade Area regional trade and investment area was endorsed as a long-term objective, and agreement was reached to set up an economic linkages task force to prepare a draft framework agreement for enhancing trade and economic cooperation. An India-ASEAN Business Summit was held in October 2002, bringing together ministers and government officials with top business executives. Participants at the first meeting of the India-ASEAN Working Group on Transport and Infrastructure agreed in September 2002 that cooperation could be achieved at the institutional and private-sector levels in railways, roads, shipping, inland waterways, ports and maritime training. A network of think tanks in India and ASEAN is also being planned (http://meadev.nic.in/foreign/asian-indrelations.htm).

V. Regional integration

25. As was reported at the twelfth session of the High-level Committee, most technical cooperation among developing countries occurs within the framework of regional integration efforts. For example, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which replaced the Organization of African Unity in July 2002, calls for a continental economic and monetary union. The year 2002 also saw the initiation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, an initiative sponsored by the Presidents of Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa that has gained unprecedented political support in Africa and internationally.

26. In March 2002, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized the Africa Development Forum III, and presented its first Annual Report on Integration in Africa (ARIA-2002), explaining the background, rationale and process envisaged for the creation of the African Union. The Forum adopted a 22-point consensus statement on regional integration and the way ahead, which was presented to the first African Union summit.

27. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) reoriented its activities in 2002 to focus on the management of regional resources, region-specific and culturally sensitive social policies, economic analyses that would promote harmonization of policies, support of human resource

[6] UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2002*.

development, the generation of data and analyses to support sound development policies, and continued support for Yemen, the only LDC in the region.

28. In 2002, ESCWA published the first issue of the Annual Review of Developments in Globalization and Regional Integration in the Countries of the ESCWA Region. The report put attempts at regional integration into historical perspective, looking back to the creation of the League of Arab States in 1945. The most successful ESCWA attempt at subregional integration has involved the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which aims at the adoption of a common currency by 2010 and eventual full economic unity of its six members (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). In 2001, GCC countries agreed to establish a unified customs tariff of five per cent as of 1 January 2003. Other decisions have allowed free movement of professionals among GCC countries and common acceptance of professional qualifications.

29. These moves towards integration come at a time when the intraregional trade of ESCWA as a proportion of the region's total trade has declined both in percentage terms — from 9.6 per cent in 1998 to 7.5 per cent in 2001 — and in absolute terms (from $32.27 billion in 2000 to $30.54 billion in 2001). These figures reflect a number of factors, including similarity of production structures within the region and inward-looking development and economic strategies.

30. Among the institutions working for greater regional integration is the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in Khartoum, which reported to the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries that training and study programmes drew 3,060 participants from 21 countries in the period 2000-2001. Its budget for technical cooperation among developing countries in 2001 was $2.2 million, up from $1.3 million in 1999 but down from $2.4 million in 2000. In terms of research, it had supported work involving 23 institutions aimed at the eradication of the Old World screw-worm fly and bio-control of the red palm weevil. The objectives of cooperation were to build capacity, transfer and develop technology and reduce environmental pollution.

31. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, was established in 1985 with a narrow technical focus, but it has extended its reach into the environmental, social and security areas. It exchanges information, formulates programmes and prepares projects through 11 technical committees ranging from Agriculture to Women's Development. One of the results of cooperation is the SAARC Food Security Reserve, maintained at a minimum level of 200,000 tons of food grains. The South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement, which became operational in December 1995, aims to create a South Asian free trade area (SAFTA) between 2008 and 2010. A high-level group has also recommended that SAFTA become a South Asian customs union by 2015 and eventually a South Asian economic union in 2020 (http://www.saarc-sec.org).

32. The fall of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in the context of globalization has focused attention in South America on physical obstacles, especially the scarcity of highway and railroad links. Existing railway links are not being maintained and are increasingly in a state of disrepair. Action to improve the situation was considered at a ministerial meeting in August 2002.

33. The Training Centre for Regional Integration (CEFIR) in Uruguay (http://www.cefir.org.uy) is a notable initiative of the Rio Group and the European Union. It promotes the exchange of experience and information among high-level public and private officials involved in the formulation, management and implementation of public policies on integration within the context of MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) and other regional free-trade arrangements. The current phase of the CEFIR programme will last for five years (2001-2005). The Rio Group consists of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and Guyana on behalf of the countries of the Caribbean.

34. The first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Brazil in March 2002, represents another notable beginning. It follows the first United Nations Inter-agency Coordination Meeting on Regional Statistical Information hosted by ECLAC in May 2001. Participants at both meetings exchanged ideas and worked on coordination arrangements. ECLAC is compiling an inventory of activities relating to the collection and dissemination of statistical information in the region and has developed a system to monitor national progress towards the goals set by various United Nations summits and conferences (ECLAC: http://www.eclac.cl and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM): http://www.caricom.org).

VI. Developed countries

35. Japan reported cooperation across a wide range of sectors, with emphasis on agriculture, mining, trade and industry, communication, science and technology and information services. With respect to priority areas mentioned in the New Directions Strategy, it indicated involvement in every area: trade and investment; debt relief and management; environment; poverty alleviation; production and employment; macroeconomic policy coordination; and aid management. Japan actively supports South-South cooperation because it has "demonstrated steadily improving effectiveness in alleviating intraregional gaps in the economic and technology dimensions, fostering stronger intraregional trade and investment".

36. In addition to the usual triangular financing arrangements, Japan has a partnership programme to encourage economically robust developing countries to become donors themselves. To date, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand and Tunisia have participated in this emerging-donor partnership, which sets targets, shares costs and provides experts for training programmes in third countries. Japan also supports a number of broad regional cooperation arrangements: the development of the Mekong River Basin and the African Institute for Capacity Development (first phase: 2000-2002; second phase: 2002-2007). Ongoing South-South cooperation projects of the Japan UNDP Human Resources Development Fund involve Africa-Asian joint research on New African Rice; water-demand management in Middle East and North Africa; development of governance capacity in Africa; post-crisis recovery and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and the Africa-Asia Business Forum III (bringing business people from the two continents together to share experience and explore common interests). Among developed donors, Japan

contributed $4,650,000 the highest amount of support to the programmes of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries during the period under review.

37. All the major donor countries are active supporters of South-South cooperation although not all use the terminology of the United Nations or report their support to the High-level Committee through the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. For instance, a search for "South-South cooperation" on the web sites of the International Development Research Centre in Canada and the Japan International Cooperation Agency produced over a hundred hits each, while at the web site of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and at EuropeAid, the web site of the European Union, there were none although both entities provide substantial support for cooperation among developing countries.

38. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), published the report "South-to-South collaboration: lessons learned" in 2002. Based on interviews with 80 donor representatives, USAID contractors and nationals of developing countries, the report identified "networks, study tours, technical assistance and training, and meetings and conferences" as the most common approaches to South-South cooperation in USAID-sponsored programmes. It underlined the importance of project designs enabling developing-country partners to determine the most appropriate approaches to use with respect to South-to-South collaboration and noted that several other determinants of success were clearly identified objectives, appropriate and committed participants, ongoing monitoring and follow-up evaluation. The study found that longer-term relationships with opportunities for follow-up activities and continued funding were more beneficial to donors and recipients than one-time projects.

39. The European Union, through its Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (launched at a 1995 conference in Barcelona, Spain), extends financial and technical assistance to promote regional dialogue, exchange and cooperation. This Partnership aims to establish a free-trade area by 2010 that will include the European Union and its 12 Mediterranean partners: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Maghreb); Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Syrian Arab Republic (Mashrek); and Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. (The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya currently has observer status at certain meetings.) Among the key elements of the programme are the development of human resources, promotion of understanding between cultures and rapprochement of the peoples in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The second phase of the programme (2000-2006) is funded at over $5 billion (€5.35 billion) (http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/137197/).

40. An innovative example of triangular cooperation is SciDev.Net, a free-access, Internet-based network devoted to reporting on and discussing those aspects of modern science and technology that are relevant to sustainable development and the social and economic needs of developing countries. The site provides a focal point for both authoritative information and informed debate on development issues relating to science and technology and addresses the information needs of a range of scientists, students, journalists, government decision makers, international aid agencies and NGOs. Support from Britain, Canada and Sweden helped to launch SciDev.Net in December 2001 (http://www.scidev.net).

VII. United Nations system

41. The Buenos Aires Conference recommended that the United Nations development system identify development solutions through technical cooperation among developing countries; apply approaches of technical cooperation among developing countries; support projects in technical cooperation among developing countries; develop, strengthen and/or reorient regional and subregional information systems; strengthen public-information support for technical cooperation among developing countries; monitor and review the above, maximize developing country inputs, and integrate and operationalize technical cooperation among developing countries into programmes of work. The Conference called especially for the strengthening of UNDP capacity to support technical cooperation among developing countries and urged close cooperation with the United Nations regional economic and social commissions. All organizations of the United Nations system, and especially the regional commissions, have reported on their efforts to implement these recommendations.

42. UNDP has continued to support South-South cooperation by seeking development solutions from the growing number of world-class institutions and individual experts in the South. An expanded network of field-based UNDP staff works with key partners to engage these resources in providing advisory services to programme countries. In addition to such traditional areas of technical cooperation as science, technology and administration, experts from the South now deal with judicial reform, local government, human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), information and communications technology and poverty eradication. Triangular cooperation has also gained new significance in the work of UNDP as Northern and Southern institutions and experts form collaborative networks to conduct joint research and share technological and financial resources while building stronger institutions in the South. An outstanding example of such partnership has involved the West Africa Rice Development Association and other partners from the North and the South, resulting in the development of new high-yielding and high-protein rice varieties called New Rice for Africa (NERICA). NERICA varieties promise to increase rice production to 744,000 tons, reducing rice imports in West Africa and saving $88 million in foreign exchange per year by 2006. Farmers growing NERICA varieties are likely to increase their incomes from rice by 25 per cent.

43. The Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries has sought to support innovative approaches to South-South cooperation through programmes on social protection for individuals in the informal sector and through the promotion of business-to-business linkages. The Special Unit continued to publish its journal, Cooperation South, which enabled it to strengthen its capacity for highlighting policy options and for building and sharing knowledge in such areas as information and communications technology for development, intellectual property rights and social protection. It also continued to update its information system, WIDE, providing an array of online services, including information on Southern expertise and innovative development practices. In addition, it initiated collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy to link WIDE with other databases maintained by the subregional resource facilities. When this work is completed, WIDE will become a major Internet gateway, providing information to

the development community on a large number of experts and institutions in the developing world.

44. An innovative initiative on HIV/AIDS in Botswana, initially sponsored by the Special Unit, was launched by the Administrator in 2001. Responding to the epidemic through collaborative efforts, the initiative drew upon Brazilian experience in countering the disease via the country's education system. Support to the member countries of the Group of 77 led to the formulation of the Teheran Consensus, a blueprint for consolidating key agreements reached by the Group of 77 over the past three decades. The Special Unit also collaborated with the Bureau for Development Policy in assisting the member countries of the Group of 77 with their preparation for the World Trade Organization (WTO) Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar in November 2001. More detailed information on the work of the Special Unit is contained in document TCDC/13/2.

45. Two recent United Nations conferences are notable in the context of South-South cooperation. The Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 stressed the need for developing countries to pool their institutional, intellectual and technical resources as they tackle common development challenges. The Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development emphasized South-South and triangular-cooperation approaches to capacity development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In particular, the Monterrey Consensus called for enhanced South-South capacity development in areas such as development of institutional infrastructure, human-resource development, public finance, mortgage finance, financial regulation and supervision, public administration, social and gender budget policies, debt management and early warning and crisis prevention. These recommendations will inform the formation of the third cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries in 2003.

46. The UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) reported that there was a move towards more complex forms of exchanges among developing countries in two regional programmes on microfinance, including quality assurance issues, through the MicroStart Programme. Additionally, technical cooperation among developing countries was commonplace in the Arab States region in the execution of country and regional programmes. With its focus on poverty alleviation, RBAS worked on projects involving education in rural communities, trade competitiveness and microfinance (mainly to improve the welfare of women). Participating countries were Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. Another initiative involved Morocco funding a project for the transfer of technology and education in Senegal.

47. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) reported that as required by the Economic and Social Council, it always gives first consideration to the modality of technical cooperation among developing countries. Among the issues mentioned in the New Directions Strategy, it deals with environment, poverty alleviation, and production and employment. In its view, the factor that contributes most to increased cooperation among developing countries is the need for concerted efforts to overcome common challenges; the greatest obstacles are lack of knowledge and information and lack of finance. UNCDF, which draws support from core UNDP resources and project funding, has shared project costs with Belgium, Britain, France and Luxembourg. Among its successful projects relating to technical cooperation among developing countries are those on policy reform, capacity

development and transfer of technology in Bangladesh and Nigeria, which involve non-governmental microfinance institutions.

48. The LatinPharma 2002 project is an initiative of the International Trade Centre (ITC). It addresses the situation in Central America, which imports 76 per cent of essential drugs while 200 or so local companies capable of producing them have idle capacity ranging from 10 and 50 per cent. A three-day event engaged 100 representatives from business, government, academia and trade-support institutions in exploring strategic alliances to find practical solutions in the areas ranging from research and development to good manufacturing practices and certification by the International Organization for Standardization. Regional marketing strategies were drafted, joint purchasing agreements signed, new relationships initiated between companies and regional universities, and the foundation laid for the development of a sustainable pharmaceutical industry in Central America. At the request of the Andean Community, an expanded LatinPharma will be organized in Lima, Peru in July 2003.

49. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reported that it always accords technical cooperation among developing countries first consideration in its programmes as mandated by the Economic and Social Council. Its activities cover communications, science and technology, information services, and trade and investment. ITU saw the growing trend towards subregional and regional integration as the factor contributing the most to increased cooperation among developing countries and the lack of finance as the most inhibiting factor. Support for its projects comes from core funds, and in 2000-2001, these projects involved 102 training programmes with several thousand participants, 482 expert missions to 48 countries, and a total budget of $16.9 million. South-South research involved cooperation between two institutions, 15 countries and the preparation of case studies on Internet use, telecommunications and information technologies. Support for capacity development involving 20 university or other training centres came from the Telecommunications Regulators Association of Southern Africa, the Asian Development Bank and other regional banks. ITU helped to establish six networks in the developing world that deal with human-resource development, training, regulation and business management. Projects benefiting 31 developing countries drew on in-kind donations from national governments and support from three international organizations and 11 bilateral donors. A particularly successful project helped with policy and institutional reform, capacity development and the transfer of technology in providing service and rural connectivity in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The project drew support from France, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates. From a project involving the reform of practices in the Sudan Telecom Company and the dissemination of its results to other developing countries, ITU noted that "TCDC does not necessarily need large amounts" of cash or dedicated infrastructure.

50. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is a strong proponent of South-South cooperation, seeing it as a "priceless commodity in the fight against AIDS". Benefits have been realized between adjacent countries, in subregional cooperation, at the regional level and across regions. The modality of South-South cooperation is used in planning, mobilization, building of partnerships and strengthening capacity. At seminars to promote South-South cooperation on HIV/AIDS, activists from Africa, Asia and Latin America have shared experiences

and formed cooperative networks that help in the planning and administration of HIV/AIDS programmes. The International Partnership against AIDS in Africa, a coalition under the leadership of African Governments that brings them together with donors, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations system, is the largest example of intensified South-South cooperation focused on a single urgent issue. UNAIDS saw South-South cooperation as "pre-eminently a 21st century strategy" because it is a knowledge strategy reflecting the empowering reality of shared knowledge: "Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than the emerging influence of South-to-South contact as a strategy to drive down the price of AIDS drugs."

51. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported that it supports economic and technical cooperation among developing countries through all its technical cooperation programmes, in particular its regional and subregional projects. It does so in the areas of policy analysis, institutional capacity development and training. Workshops, seminars and training courses are particularly important in the exchange of experience and to work out the modalities for continuing cooperation among developing countries. Special attention is given to technical cooperation among developing countries in providing advisory services in all four areas of the work of UNCTAD: globalization and development; international trade in goods and services and commodity issues; investment, technology and enterprise development; and services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency. Total expenditure on technical cooperation activities (core funds and extrabudgetary) was $23 million in 2001; no figures are available to show how much of this amount involved technical cooperation among developing countries. In the area of training and capacity development, UNCTAD has entered into arrangements with several institutions in developing countries, including the International Institute for Trade and Development in Thailand, the Southern African Trade Research Network and the State University of Campinas in Brazil. It has also launched and supported several networks of think tanks and universities involved in the area of trade and development, such as the Latin American Trade Network and other subregional networks in the Africa region. An example of a successful project relating to technical cooperation among developing countries is the bilateral investment treaty (BIT) negotiations, meant to help developing countries, and particularly LDCs, to strengthen investment cooperation among themselves. At BIT negotiations for LDCs in January 2001, 41 agreements were concluded; at negotiations in October of the same year, another 13 were concluded.

52. The United Nations University (UNU) has used elements of South-South cooperation in projects relating to agriculture, science and technology, environment and poverty alleviation. It saw the growing number of experts in developing countries and the need for concerted efforts to overcome common challenges as the factors contributing most to South-South cooperation. Lack of effective institutions and communication and lack of resources were the greatest hindrances to its efforts at South-South cooperation. With core funding and specially mobilized project resources totalling $4.6 million in the period 2000-2001, UNU organized 24 training programmes in 12 countries and assigned 25 experts to 12 countries. It cited the People, Land Management and Environmental Change project as a successful example of triangular cooperation.

53. The FAO Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) uses South-South cooperation to promote one of the primary goals of development. SPFS provides

experts from advanced developing countries to work directly with farmers in rural communities in other developing countries. Some 20 advanced developing countries have expressed their willingness to support one or more countries. Altogether, some 2,600 experts and technicians from developing countries are expected to work with the SPFS for a period of two to three years. The experts cover all areas relating to food security: irrigation, plant nutrition and soil fertility, marketing, cooperatives, rural credit and finance, seed production, agricultural engineering and animal and crop production, to name only a few. By March 2002, 26 agreements had been signed between countries, namely, Senegal-Viet Nam, Ethiopia-China, Eritrea-India, Niger-Morocco, Burkina Faso-Morocco, Benin-Viet Nam, Mauritania-China, United Republic of Tanzania-Egypt, Gambia-Bangladesh, Djibouti-Egypt, Madagascar-Viet Nam, Bangladesh-China, Mali-China, Malawi-Egypt, Equatorial Guinea-Cuba, Cape Verde-Cuba, Ghana-China, Cameroon-Egypt, Swaziland-Pakistan, Haiti-Cuba, Mozambique-India, Venezuela-Cuba, Lesotho-India, Lao People's Democratic Republic-Viet Nam, Republic of the Congo-Viet Nam and Guinea-Bissau-Cuba. Another 15 similar agreements are in different phases of preparation (http://www.fao.org/spfs/southsouth_en.stm).

54. An emerging agricultural issue is organic farming. Developing countries with growing organic-farming movements include: Bolivia, Cameroon, Ghana, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, Peru, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Major markets for organic products are growing at rates of 10-15 per cent per year, according to UNCTAD, and technical cooperation is invaluable in assisting organic farmers in developing countries to cope with a range of problems from access to information and meeting regulatory codes to finance, transport and packaging. Few Governments have policies and capacities to extend such help. FAO and UNCTAD are helping to change this through seminars and dissemination of information materials.

55. The normative work of the World Health Organization (WHO) has strengthened national information systems on health and has led to an integrated approach to the surveillance of communicable diseases that pools the resources and capacities of networked laboratories, vital registration systems, service systems and sentinel sites. WHO regional offices support a range of networks that generate and use information. Regional networks have helped 70 countries to have full national health accounts. Cooperation among developing countries has been instrumental in the production of the first World Health Report in 2002, which presents information for 14 epidemiological subregions. Over 100 outside collaborators were involved in the effort to quantify the extent of the burden associated with each risk factor and to outline the costs and effects of selected interventions to reduce the burden.

56. All five regional commissions of the United Nations have made significant contributions to South-South cooperation. Those in Africa, Asia and Latin America have been involved in one way or another in most of the programmes and projects described above. In addition, they play a key role in dealing with the issues of specially disadvantaged groups of countries. LDCs are a particular concern for Africa (where 34 of 49 LDCs are found) and Asia (which has 14). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with UNDP, has established the ESCAP/UNDP Poverty Centre, which will review the major indicators of the Millennium Development Goals and facilitate the monitoring of progress towards the goals set by the 2001 Third United Nations

Conference on the Least Developed Countries. During the period under review, ESCAP missions visited Cambodia (development planning) and Myanmar (space applications for geologic surveys, WTO agreements, and trade and investment). ECA undertook a comprehensive assessment of the economic and social condition of LDCs in the region and initiated policy-relevant work designed to enhance their capacity to participate in international trade and trade negotiations relating to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States-European Union cooperation agreements. LDC negotiators also participated in a preparatory meeting in June 2001 for the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference later the same year.

57. The ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre in Vanuatu channels most activity relating to technical cooperation among developing countries for the region's 19 small island States. A total of 50 activities relating to economic and technical cooperation were implemented under this programme during the period 2000-2001, the majority of them involving the development of human resources. Several Member States participated in the implementation under their national programmes for technical cooperation among developing countries. There was also close cooperation with subregional organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. A subregional preparatory meeting for the World Summit for Social Development helped to incorporate the Pacific Islands viewpoint into the Asia and the Pacific regional position. The ESCAP Pacific Trust Fund, established in 1988, ensures that Pacific Island countries actively participate in the annual ESCAP sessions. In addition, the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries helps Pacific Island countries to identify their priority areas for technical assistance from ESCAP.

58. The implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean is a joint endeavour of ECLAC and CARICOM, the latter entrusted with political outreach. In mid-2001, an updated joint work programme with social, economic and environmental components was adopted.

59. Following the first and second (1999, 2001) meetings of the regional commission officials responsible for the development of transport infrastructure, the General Assembly in 2001 approved a $1.25 million project to develop interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages. It will enable countries to assess the development impact of potential interregional transport linkages by strengthening the capacity of their officials to identify physical and non-physical impediments and opportunities. The third meeting of regional transportation officials (2002) carried forward the process of project implementation and budget allocation as well as the possibility of cooperation in research and analysis to create a better understanding of existing and potential problems and opportunities.

60. On environmental issues, all the regional commissions are engaged in technical cooperation among developing countries. ECA, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and ESCWA have a joint Mediterranean initiative that includes projects on groundwater and the environment, alternative funding mechanisms for renewable energy and environmental conservation. ECE and ESCAP have been working with Central Asian countries on a number of projects, including one on efficient use of energy and water resources. In addition, ECE and ESCAP have coordinated their energy-related activities and extrabudgetary resources, jointly publishing the Guide for the Promotion of Energy Conservation

Regulations in Economies in Transition. They also worked together on the first (2001) ESCAP North-East Asia Expert Group Meeting on Inter-country Cooperation in Electric Power Development.

VIII. Non-governmental organizations

61. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant advocacy and operational role in many areas of South-South cooperation, and each specialized agency of the United Nations system has its own cluster of partner NGOs. Often the patterns of cooperation that NGOs promote involve North-South and South-South processes. For example, AGRECOL, an NGO with a membership of farmers and representatives of farmers groups from over 20 countries, has led the way in popularizing organic farming and is also playing a lead role in providing technical support for organic farmers in developing countries in their effort to formulate regionally relevant standards. At a meeting organized by AGRECOL in October 2002, NGOs, academics, research centres, organic certification agencies and advisory groups adopted a declaration endorsing support for close South-to-South collaboration between Asia, Africa and Latin America in developing a locally based and self-reliant organic agriculture movement. The group called for the development of national and regional organic standards in Southern countries and for a restructuring of the International Basic Standards and Codex Alimentarius for organically produced food.

IX. Conclusions

62. On the basis of the findings described in the narrative above, it is possible to reach the following conclusions:

(a) South-South cooperation is becoming a mainstream modality in all regions and most sectors. The rapid economic growth of a number of developing countries, increased technical ability in many more, the availability of high-quality expertise in the developing world and the fall of attitudinal barriers have all contributed to this success. In this sense, BAPA and the New Directions Strategy have been broadly implemented;

(b) South-South cooperation has drawn substantial and increasing support from developed countries. Although widely perceived to be inadequate, the scope of ongoing support for activities relating to technical cooperation among developing countries is substantial;

(c) Lack of information about developing countries is widely perceived to be an obstacle to South-South cooperation. There are no sufficient statistics or reliable estimates of how much is spent on technical cooperation among developing countries. This is true at the national, regional and international levels but very few Governments have addressed the need to create national databases of experts and capabilities;

(d) While there is considerable activity relating to technical cooperation among developing countries within the framework of regional commissions and other subregional groupings, only a few pivotal countries and Japan in the donor

community have given high priority to technical cooperation among developing countries in terms of policy and project activity;

(e) Lack of resources, information, analysis and policy have resulted in conceptual vagueness and lack of comprehension about the nature and scope of technical cooperation among developing countries at the national, regional and international levels. As a consequence, effective mechanisms and institutions to coordinate and manage South-South cooperation have not been developed;

(f) The points noted above mean that developing countries need to take a more strategic view of the catalytic role of technical cooperation among developing countries by strengthening the framework within and mechanisms within which to set policy, plan projects and coordinate activities. A strategic perspective is also essential if developing countries are to adopt policies and programmes to prepare their economies for entry into global markets, minimize negative effects and maximize benefits. It is also critical in order for developed and developing countries to make optimum use of scarce financial, institutional, scientific and technical resources. Without it, there can be no clear assessment of best practices and the effectiveness of partnerships between government, non-governmental entities and the private sector;

(g) As countries scale up their efforts to attract and benefit from export-oriented foreign direct investment, they face the challenge of dealing with transnational corporations and remaining competitive in a changing world market. Without cooperation and coordination, developing countries could engage in similar rather than complementary production and market strategies, risking a collapse of prices for their exports. Intense competition for export-oriented FDI could also become "a race to the bottom" in social and environmental standards. Cooperation among developing countries can build indigenous capacity to deal with and draw the most benefits from meeting these challenges.

X. Recommendations

63. The main conclusions of the present report relate to the inadequacy of information and analysis about South-South cooperation and the consequent lack of strategic perspective. This situation has received increasing attention from Governments in recent years because the periodic reviews of the action plans of major United Nations conferences have all shown a lag in strategic action. The General Assembly established a Working Group in 2002 to study the situation and make recommendations, and it is expected to submit its findings by May 2003. Developing countries have also focused on the problem of multiplying mandates and lagging implementation of action plans for cooperative action; the South Summit of the Group of 77, held in Havana in April 2000, specifically focused on this issue. The recommendations below aim at focusing international attention on strategic issues while creating incentives within existing systems of cooperation to generate the continuing information flows needed to steer South-South cooperation in the appropriate direction.

64. The High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries may wish to recommend that:

(a) WIDE be continually developed as a mechanism to facilitate the sharing of information and lessons learned in view of the fact that work is under way for the system to be transformed into a key platform for the UNDP subregional resource facilities;

(b) The Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries surveys existing international technical cooperation arrangements within the framework of the action plans adopted by major United Nations conferences and South-South forums such as the South Summit. The Special Unit should, in consultation with United Nations organizations, subsequently recommend effective South-South mechanisms for implementing such action plans;

(c) The Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries devise new mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Committee through closer collaboration with selected subregional groupings in the developing world.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ADB	African Development Bank
ARIA	Annual Report on Integration in Africa
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAPA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BIT	bilateral investment treaty
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEFIR	Training Centre for Regional Integration
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBC	Brazilian Cooperation Fund
FDI	foreign direct investment
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
INBAR	International Network for Bamboo and Rattan
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITEC	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JTCP	Joint Technical Cooperation Programme
LDC	least developed country
MTCP	Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme
NERICA	New Rice for Africa
NGO	non-governmental organization
NTF	Nigeria Trust Fund
RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAFTA	South Asian free trade area

SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
TCDC	technical cooperation among developing countries
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNU	United Nations University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WIDE	Web of Information for Development
WTO	World Trade Organization